Synopsis

This research study looks into the application, relevance and effectiveness of 'Information and Communication Technology' in 'Communicative Language Learning' (CLL) classrooms at Higher Secondary level in Kerala.

The recent revolutionary developments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have changed our world into what is called a 'knowledge society' where information is more globally shared and freely accessed than ever before and its advances affect all aspects of our life, including our approach to Education and 'English Language Teaching' (ELT). The advent of ICT along with the access and availability of modern communicative devices such as Internet, cell phones, and social networks have drastically changed human life. Modern ICT have created a 'global village' in which people can communicate with each other across the world as if they are living next door. ICT is also instrumental in making English a global language as it plays a vital role in the acquisition of English language skills. It has been empirically verified, however, that the students at higher secondary level in Kerala do not possess adequate English language skills and that the potential of ICT in enhancing such students' English language skills is less utilized.

This research thesis titled 'Application of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in Communicative Language Learning' (CLL) is organised into six chapters which discuss at length how ICT can be applied in CLL classrooms at Higher Secondary level in Kerala. The introductory chapter presents the design and the theoretical background of the study. The second chapter introduces 'new media' such as computers and ICT. The various approaches and methods in ELT and the role of ICT and CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) in ELT are discussed in the third chapter. Chapter four is a comprehensive description of the survey undertaken and the analysis of its results using statistical tools. Chapter Five presents the findings and interpretations based on the study.

Chapter six, the concluding chapter, presents the major recommendations and limitations of the study including its achievements in relation to the stated aims and objectives.

Chapter One gives a general outline of the study including a review of relevant literature on ICT, CLL, CALL and ET (Educational Technology). It also deals with the definition of Educational Technology based on different theoretical perspectives of learning such as Behaviorism, Cognitivism and Constructivism. The second chapter deals with the background of the study, the history and the definition of IT/ICT and its impact on Education and ELT in India/Kerala. It describes how the avowed goal of UNESCO to achieve 'Education for all' among its member nations can be realized by integrating new technologies such as multimedia, e-learning and distance education.

The third chapter deals with various approaches and methods in language teaching and extensively analyses the role of ICT in ELT. Also, the concept, the philosophy and the history of CALL are discussed at length based on Levy's definition of CALL as 'the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning.'

Keeping the main objectives of the research project in mind, Chapter Four analyses more elaborately the methodology made use of in this study which is a combination of survey and experimental methods. It surveys the academic attitude of Higher Secondary students and English language teachers of Kerala, especially of Thrissur and Ernakulam districts, to the ICT enabled Communicative English classrooms. In order to find out the effectiveness of ICT, ICT model English teaching was conducted in two selected schools in Thrissur in Kerala. The various steps followed in ICT model English teaching were 'introducing the topic using LCD Projector', 'reading the selected text by the teacher and the students', 'showing video clips of recitation and dramatization of the text (a poem)', 'evaluating the students based on the text taught', and a collection of feedback/opinionnaire from the students regarding the ICT model and the traditional model of English teaching.

The fifth chapter presents the findings and interpretations, arrived at by using statistical tools, based on the survey and the experimental studies. The survey shows an increasing trend in the usage and application of computers by the students and teachers for their personal, social and academic purposes. The sample selected for the survey is 250 higher secondary students and 300 teachers from Thrissur and Ernakulam districts in Kerala. The major findings of the survey are concerned with (a) positive trend in using IT devices by higher secondary students (74% use mobile phones, 49% have computer at home, and 22.8% use digital camera), (b) positive use of software packages (74% use it for painting, 60.38% for word processing, 52.83% for power point presentations, 51.42% for excel applications, 27.83% for movie making, and 26.42% use it for Photoshop), (c) the higher usage of Internet among higher secondary students (75% of students use Net, 63.6% use it for chatting, 33.6% for conferencing, 18.4% to browse Wikis, and 17.6% for browsing blogs), (d) membership trends in various social networks (41.2% in Orkut, 18.8% in Facebook, and 8% in Twitter), and (e) trends in the use of Net in general (used mainly for entertainment than for study, and the general absence of marked 'digital divide' between higher secondary students and teachers).

In the survey, 60% of students recommended ICT model teaching as the future method of ELT. In the experimental ICT model English teaching, conducted in two schools for a month in Thrissur (Kerala) involving 155 students from Commerce and Science streams, students' marks in the previous term examination were taken for pre-test and a post-test was conducted to assess the achievement of students after ICT model teaching. The comparison of students' achievements in pre-test and post-test was done using statistical tools. The effectiveness of ICT Method over Traditional Method of ELT was analyzed and the major trends in the findings are: (i) T-value for comparison of achievement of students after ICT method over the traditional method (8.666) was found to be significant at 0.01 levels, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis and finding significant difference in the

achievement after the application of ICT model of teaching, (ii) ICT method of teaching is more conductive to developing oral communication skills, and (iii) observance of balanced development of all four skills in ICT model CLL classrooms.

Chapter six is the concluding chapter which shows how far the aims and objectives of the study have been achieved and discusses in particular the major recommendations and limitations of the study with respect to ELT in India/Kerala. The recommendations at the levels of students, teachers and administrators emphasize that ICT content can be incorporated into English syllabus to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to become competent and creative users of English as ICT prepares them to meet the challenges in life, especially in communication needs. Based on the results of survey, comparative studies, and the opinionnaire, the researcher comes to the conclusion that 'Information and Communication Technology' in 'Communicative Language Learning' classrooms at Higher Secondary level can be highly relevant, appropriate, and effective. It is recommended that by incorporating ICT, the English curriculum can be improved to enhance the learning of all four language skills for effective communication. It supports collaboration, creativity, independent learning and reflection in CLL classrooms. In this age of digital literacy, it is the need of the hour to utilize ICT fully in the field of ELT/CLL to meet all the future challenges in teaching/learning process. ICT in English teaching enhances interest in learning, promotes self-learning in and outside classrooms, makes teachers more employable by improving their range of skills, empowers both the teacher and the learner and provides access to authentic materials and firsthand information. **(1502 words)**